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AN ACT

To Perpetuate Testimony in cases of Slaves abducted or harbored by the Enemy, and of other property seized, wasted or destroyed by them. No. 270.

SECTION 1. *The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact*, That when any slave or slaves owned by a citizen of the Confederate States, or an inhabitant thereof, shall be, or may have been abducted or harbored by the enemy, or by any person or persons acting under the authority, or color of authority of the United States government, or engaged in the military or naval service thereof, during the existing war, it shall be lawful for the owner or his attorney to appear before any Judge of the Confederate States, or a Commissioner of any Court thereof, or any Notary Public, or in case of there being no such officer within the county, city or corporation, where the proceedings are instituted, before any Justice of the Peace or Alderman, consenting to act in the premises, and adduce proof, oral or written, of the fact of such ownership and abduction or harboring. If the owner of such slave or slaves is laboring under the legal disability of infancy, insanity or coverture, the evidence tending to establish such ownership, and abduction or harboring, may be adduced by the proper legal representative of the owner. In all cases such owner, attorney or representative shall make affidavit of the loss. Such affidavit shall not be taken as evidence of the fact of loss, unless it shall appear to the satisfaction of the officer taking the same that no other and better evidence can be obtained, which fact shall distinctly appear in the certificate of such officer; and it shall be the duty of the judicial officer taking cognizance of the case, to reduce to writing the oral evidence, and to retain the written evidence in support of the alleged ownership and loss, and within thirty days after the hearing, to transmit the same to the Secretary of State of the Confederate States, to be filed and preserved among the archives of the State Department, accompanied by a certificate from the said judicial officer, authenticating the report so made by him. And the said judicial officer shall also state in his certificate of authentication, whether, in his opinion, the evidence so heard and transmitted is, or is not, entitled to credit. It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State to receive and file in his Department the report so transmitted, and to furnish to the owners, attorney or representative a duly certified copy thereof, whenever the same shall be demanded.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That whenever any property, other than slaves, real or personal, belonging to any citizen of the Confederate States, or any inhabitant thereof, shall be seized, wasted or destroyed by the enemy, during the existing war, or by any person or persons acting under the authority, or color of authority of the United States government or engaged in the military or naval service thereof, the mode of taking and preserving proof thereof shall conform in all respects to that prescribed in the above section, and have like effect.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the provision of this act shall not be construed as implying that the Confederate States are in any way liable to make compensation for any of the property to which it refers.

APPROVED August 30, 1861.

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